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by Henry Theodore Johnson, D. D.*

# LUX GENTIS NIGRAE.

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## DEDICATION :

TO BISHOP H. M. TURNER, D. D., L. L. D., and others  
who in the main foresee only darkness,  
degradation and death,  
for the race in  
America.

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## INTRODUCTION—

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

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## INTRODUCTION.

The Bright Side of the Race Picture! A fitting subject, it seems to me, for this splendid little volume Dr. Johnson has so admirably written. I beleive in optimism. During the many long years in which the Negro has been subject to oppression and injustice of one kind and another, the one thing that has helped him most in his struggle for a higher, nobler and better manhood, has been the hopeful, optimistic spirit with which he has borne his troubles. Adversities many and painful has he suffered in his onward struggle, and by it all, he has been more helped than the unthinking would suppose. During it all the Negro has been hopeful; has looked ahead for the brighter day.

To me the future seems full of hope and promise for the race. True it is that many trials and discouragements lie ahead, but we are making indisputable, tangible progress—progress that means success. Coming out of serfdom penniless, uneducated and with no property, the Negro has made more rapid strides toward the higher civilization than has been true of any other race under similar circumstances and conditions. He is acquiring property, he is becoming educated in a way

that makes him a useful law-abiding citizen—attainments and tendencies that make his future hopeful in the extreme.

Happy is Dr. Johnson in giving this refreshing little volume, every page of which is redolent with words of encouragement and hope, to the public at this time, when the Race Question is demanding the thought and attention of thinking, earnest people in all walks of life. These discussions at times cause many to look to the future with despair, for too often the tendency is to judge the race by its worst element, by its shiftless class. And so it is that *The Bright Side of the Race Picture*, dealing with the promising phase of the question, as it does, has an especial mission to perform, and if, by its encouragement and hope, it contributes toward the end of making the race stand on its own feet and develop its own resources, if it throws light upon the solution of an all-important problem, its mission will be performed.

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON.

Tuskegee, Alabama.

Oct. 7th, 1903.

## LUX GENTIS NIGRAE

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RACE INFANCY AND WHAT IMPLIED.

Every man is the architect of his own fortune. This truism applies with equal force to peoples of the same race-type no less than to individuals. No greater harm can be done the youth who has not tried his own powers than to furnish him help he does not need or pamper his hopes with props that can yield no support in the trying days. Sympathy and instruction should not be withheld, but help should be withheld to the same wise extent it is withdrawn from the child who may get along without it. Aside from picking up the little one at intervals and setting it to rights again, the sensible mother spends no idle time lamenting over the misfortune of the child's falls and cries or in bottling up its tears. Full well she knows

that the ups and downs of childhood are necessary stages to sure-footed manhood. Its ills may be somewhat humored with outlays of sweetmeats and caresses at times, but its falls and heartbreaking outcries are looked upon as lung-tests and chest-protectors or aids to its bodily growth and vigor. From the child's standpoint, the estimate of these cross-grained experiences is quite different as a matter of course. But what it takes as serious outside of cramps, colics and such like ills, is disposed of as already suggested. Little ones who are nursed as hot-house plants rarely amount to much, while those who make the port of credit are usually the ones whom the combined forces of adversity stormed against in vain. Frederic Douglass in childhood bereft of a name and shorne of a mother's care, with Booker T. Washington, both tried metal bearing the stamp of the same mine and mint, are striking examples of what their people must pass through in

their infancy ere the sun shall crown their later life and service. Not to manhood nor success nor greatness is there any royal road. The shining outstretched prize is visible only to the eye of faith, it is open only to the heart of courage, and can be plucked only by the aspiring, all-endeavoring hand linked to and led by the Hand unseen.

OPPOSED BUT NOT FRIENDLESS.

The complaint is often heard that the Negro's friends are not as numerous as formerly and that those disposed to help him are becoming few and far between. The murmur, though by no means groundless, is not an impeachment of our former friends, nor in the least indicative that those interested in our welfare are growing less numerous. True it is that outward signs of sympathy are not favorable to the race as in times past. Time there was when the hand of philanthropy was outstretched and the voice of friendship cheered the new-born race from

every direction. Christianity plead its Macedonian cry and missionaries flocked from their northern homes to cheer and uplift the struggling millions in their southern quarters. Christianity bore to these needy millions the word of God and tender instructors to expound the same. It built churches and schools and furnished books to the illiterate and teachers without cost. This it did in the face of ridicule and scorn from boastful superiors, and without a sense of condescension toward those it would upraise.

In this noble service of redeeming a people long neglected and wronged, Christianity found a noble ally in philanthropy and benevolence of the purest type. Was the Negro's citizenship after his enfranchisement imperilled? The truest statesmanship of the day stood ready with armoured shield and sharpened lance to rush to his defense. On the shining arena of knight errantry in the halls of Congress in his behalf were such



heroes as Charles Sumner, Thaddeus Stevens, General Butler, Roscoe Conkling and others whose names will flourish in undying glory. They and men of kindred spirit and statesmanship made it possible for black men to wield the ballot weapon in their own defense. Their intercession and support gave the right of way to every office seat from local Coroner to Congressional honors. The broad-guaged statesmanship of the times welcomed colored men into the highest political councils of the state and nation. It greeted the advent of ex-slaves into the Senate chamber and accorded the Speaker's gavel to B. K. Bruce, who shed greater lustre on his country than his predecessor, the far-famed Jeff. Davis, the Confederate chieftain, who resigned its honors and sought its cleavage, or his present day successor, Senator Money.

#### NEGRO SUFFRAGE JUSTIFIED.

Those who raise the foolish outcry

against the black man's use of the ballot too soon forget the splendid service to which he put this weapon when first he plied it. But for his patriotism at the ballot-box as on the battle-field the dismembered nation and seceded States never would have been restored. No better use could he make of the ballot than with it demonstrate his knowledge of and love for what was best for his country's welfare. His loyal ballot not only brought back into the Union the disloyal States, but laid the foundation for a bulwark and temple that would tower and shine to the credit and safety of generations untold. The public school system of the Southland to-day, whatever its shortcomings with regard to the quality or quantity of the mental ration it doles the children of color throughout that section, was voted into life by the ancestors of these children. It was in their power to abuse or tamper with this prerogative by legislating mixed schools for the races,

as in the North, but this was not done. The failure to do so is but another link in the chain of evidence as to the consideration of the race for its haughty, domineering neighbor, even when powerless to help itself.

THE PROBLEM MORE NATIONAL THAN  
RACIAL.

All countries have problems which rack the brains of their wisest statesmen and ablest philosophers. The history of monarchies and republics alike have ever offered such problems to mankind and will continue so to do until the light of the millenium gilds and girdles our error-smitten and sin-burdened earth. As nations like individuals have missions and a destiny to fulfill, it is possible to obscure but not ignore the divine or ethical element which demands more than their activities. No man can repudiate the claims of the moral code in his career with impunity, and history with philosophy establishes the same truth in con-

nection with governments. Whether their operations be on the lowest plane of despotism or in a limited monarchy or in the sphere of democracy where the consent of the governed is actually or theoretically sought as in our own land, certain standards and regulations are acknowledged and applied in all administrations of justice or manipulation of the machinery of law and exercise of national policy. As to whether a nation survive a thousand years or a decade depends largely upon the display of wisdom on the part of its founders in the adoption of certain fundamental standards in its constitution, wise or otherwise, and the consideration with which their successors regard the trust.

#### NATION'S CORRECT THEORY AND MISSION.

The skeleton fingers of overthrown governments lift their ghastly warning against the danger of divorcing the Almighty from a nation's organic life or activities. Happily for the nation and

government of ours, their framers were true to the teachings of the past and responsive to the impulse of the truest philosophy and the best religion. The highest wisdom was displayed when the Bible was adopted as the chart of the ship of state for the newly united colonies and belief in the God of the Universe professed as the compass and sheet-anchor of the infant nation's welfare. Than our Declaration of Independence no nobler instrument, barring the Decalogue, was ever drawn. Its inimitable preamble in world-embracing scope aptly answers to Paul's proclamation in evidence of the common origin and oneness of the human species. This prime plank in the nation's platform affords a *terra firma* footing on which every comer to our shores may securely trust his weight, the enemy to American laws and institutions alone excepted. While the red-handed anarchist is excluded from the hand of American fellowship by character

and creed, the same exclusion is also held for the sable citizen by partisan skeptics and sectional colorphobists whose title to full-fledged citizenship has never been half as clearly established as that of his disputed Brother in Black. The denial of application of the phrase "all men are created free and equal" to the colored man had its answer in the philosophy of the situation as it obtained when the Constitution was promulgated as well as in the logic of succeeding events. The divinity of bondage and racial inferiority were dangerous dogmas to be held by a people struggling for release from foreign oppression and its assumption of royal sovereignty. The effort to enjoy the substance of freedom for themselves and torment others with the notes and sound of liberty after the Old Bell had "proclaimed liberty throughout the land to all the inhabitants thereof" was like "running with the hare and holding with the hounds" on the part of the American people and

it was inevitable that they soon tire of the chase. The logic of events fulfilled the philosophic statement of Mr. Lincoln that a nation can not exist part slave and part free, while it also suggests the truth of the couplet—

“All men are equal in God’s sight.

There is no black, there is no white.”

In favor of the certain recognition of the colored man’s rights in common with those of other citizens are the nation’s cosmopolitan dogma of universal equality and the slow and gradual dissipation of the clouds which have stubbornly enveloped this question. But had the nation adopted no world-embracing creed, or had its congenial shores offered no inviting asylum for the refuge-seeking pilgrims of other lands, the divine element in the problem would yet have remained to be reckoned with. While among the early settlers were those in quest of religious liberty there were those also who sought the glory and spoils of states-

craft or who looked for the main chance in slave traffic or in commercial adventure. Whoever they were and from whatever clime, these emigrants came no hide-bound iron-clad enactment decreed their fate in the new western land of promise.

WHY THE RACE HERE.

All but one of the various branches of the human family represented in the eventful hegira to the American paradise came by invitation or journeyed hither of their own accord. Far different was it the case with the child of bondage and adversity of sable hue ordained to cut such an important figure in the life and destiny strange and forbidding environments. Abraham was called of the Almighty to of the virgin nation. Others have been called of Heaven to try their fortunes amid divorce himself from the ties of country and kinship. While not knowing whither he was to go, the hardship of emigration was greatly neutralized by the certainty of the call of Heaven on the one hand and



the promise of an overwhelming reward on the other. Only the dark and penal side of the picture seemed visible in the black man's divorcement from his native land. A providence there was in the cruel fate which tore him from tribe and parental ties in Africa for the slave traffic as it did his offsprings through centuries of slavery in America, but this providence seemed at the time by far more permissive than directive. In proof of the latter claim arguments were specious and ample on the part of those who saw only the humane side of the traffic in human flesh and who held that the system was anything but the "sum of villainy," as Mr. Wesley, the founder of Methodism, charged. The silver lining to the cloud drapery above his head, if any there was, was left rather for his distant descendant with the radiant torch of history and faith to discern rather than for himself with an environment, heredity and adversity fettering his vision with three-fold blindness, to discover.

The sale of Joseph by his brothers into slavery furnishes a more striking counterpart of the Negro's case than any instance covered by ancient or modern history. Think of the tender son of Jacob kidnapped by his brothers, thrust into a pit and left for dead; then recall the tragic story of the motley-colored coat soaked in gore lending strength to the gruesome tale of its wearer's doom from ravenous beasts; let the plot thicken as the child of destiny is lifted from the pit and bartered to a band of traders, who dispose of their tender prize to an Egyptian buyer, and the story can but suggest a preface and prophecy to the history of Ham's descendents in America. The sequel of the Negro's history has not yet been written, but the story of Jacob's son in Egypt more than likely has its opening key of analogy. In the land to which Joseph was sold a stranger he wrought out a royal career step by step. The pathway of his upward journey lay through the

fires of adversity, but he came forth like purified gold bearing the assayer's stamp.

It is useless to quarrel with Providence for allowing our forefathers to be torn from their native continent. The Almighty hand that rescued them and theirs from the horrible pit of slavery has an equally royal goal in reservation for us and ours if only we quit ourselves like men, enter in and occupy the allotted heritage.

PROBLEM GRASPED ONLY BY THE FEW.

Perhaps it is only with the more serious and reflecting minds among our people that the race question takes on dark and difficult phases. It is not likely that the masses are much disturbed about the things that perplex the minds and depress the spirit of the more intelligent members of the race. To be sure, the rank and file of the masses cannot be indifferent to the wrongs and outrageous treatment they are called upon to endure day by day. Their sense of justice must naturally move them

at least to silently and perhaps sullenly protest against the countless unkind and outlandish things they suffer. To assume that any one of the multitudinous number referred to in the South or elsewhere accepts the grinding situation of servile subjection to the domineering race without an inner resentment to say the least, is to assume such an individual to be devoid of the instinct common to the animal world. Not less sensible are the masses of the type in question to the monstrous wrongs they bear than were their progenitors insensible to the grievous outrage of slavery. The latter was endured not so much because of the abject inability or indisposition of the victims to rid themselves of the oppressor's yoke, as because of their instinctive trust in the Providence that shapes all things right in the end and because of the exercise of that wisdom which cometh from above, which is peaceful and gentle and leads to hope always for the best.

## THE SCOPE OF FAITH UNDER ORDEALS.

It is to this ever-active inner-working providence that the leaders and thoughtful element of the race must now and henceforth look if we will escape the meshes of the wilderness and enter the promised land of Canaan. The murmurings of those who quarrel with Providence for leading us into the desert out of Egypt must be stopped. The plentiful onions and leeks supplied by Pharaoh were good, also quite refreshing were the Egyptian streams which bubbled in copious fullness, but these provisions of their bondage state were as far-surpassed by the delectable diet of Heaven's orderings as a Delmonico bill-of-fare puts to blush the contents of an ordinary lunch counter. The hue and cry so often heard that it has never been so hopeless with the race as now and that our salvation as a people hinges more upon going to Africa than upon making the most of where we are and of the

situations about us, is but a repetition of the rebellious behaviour of ungrateful Israel of old and must be cured if it takes biting serpents and fiery judgments to do so. There is no serious danger of the masses provoking the Almighty to anger from the sin of rebellion half so much as from the sin of forgetfulness and downright spiritual blindness. It is they who should be eyes to the sightless multitude who delay if not imperil their highest welfare at the hands of an unerring and ever-gracious Providence.

Two more thoughts of vital bearing upon the subject and the conclusion of these pertinent reflections is reached. The pilgrimage traversed and obstacles by the wayside have been disposed of in a referential if not exhaustive way. It is good for the race to glance backwards and mark the milestones of its progress. It is also stimulating to its future strides to be able to review the difficulties already dispersed. The race can do both of

the suggested duties with alacrity and wholesome returns. What of the future and what of the foe, are the thoughts which remain to be reckoned with.

As to the adversaries of the race, the habit of capitalizing them is too often indulged. It is to be feared that more time is lost in exercising concern over this barrier to our advancement than the royal end to be attained doth warrant. Why should one's foe be made so important as to become formidable and retard rather than aid in the onward march of the struggle upward?

#### SUGGESTIONS OF HISTORY.

Moses and Pharaoh should serve as perpetual studies to all race leaders of doubtful courage and waning faith. One had but a pitiable rod, the other was armed with a monarch's sceptre. But in the eye of God's chosen one the sceptre was no more than a fragile stick, while the shepherd's rod objectified a wonder-working wand. So was David's sling in

contrast with Goliath's spear, and Gideon's pitchers with armies of the Amalekites. The fearful spies were unfit to conduct the march to Canaan for they feared the sons of Anak. God's present day leaders are not to be trusted with a following if they can not muster courage to urge their people to go forward in spite of wicked men and bristling demons.

But what of the end and will it be morning or noonday? are questions which will not down at reason's fiat or retire in silence at the decree of faith. We want to know will the Negro race ultimately survive and gain ascendancy. His is the only race that has looked the daring, dominant brother of ashen hue in the face and lived. The Red man contested strength with him and soon read his doom in the setting sun. The Yellow man reared towering walls of civilization that mocked his dreams for countless centuries, but those Chinese walls have bowed to the white man's masterly tread and to-day he



is virtually monarch of the Flowery Realm. The Brown man has turned from the gauntlet thrown down and contents himself with what he is allowed to have, ever suing for peace in the reminder to Japhet, "We are brethren."

REASSURING REFLECTIONS.

How comes it, and with what assumption does the black man, the youngest child of the human family, dare aspire to a place by his imperious white brother and former master? Intollerable gall they say that black necks once under the heels of white mastery should seek the ornamentation of official trusts and governmental authority. Alas that the claims of humanity and the teachings of history should be forgotten or ignored. The black man (represented by the aspiring type) has never reached the ignoble depth in which the ancestral white man reveled for ages. It was never said of him, at least as was said of the white man of the past, that he is too inferior to measure up

to the dignity of slavery. Suppose that great Cæsar's reproach of the white man had been accepted as a standard by him or his descendants. The most resplendent eras of the world's history would than have been substituted by eons of barbarism or the gray dawn of centuries of semi-enlightenment for the race.

BASELESS CHARGES ANSWERED.

The cheap talk of "Negro inferiority," "Negro place" and "white man's country" so current in certain parts of the land is veriest bosh and rot of the driest kind.

Negro inferior! Shades of Epictetus, the philosopher; Aesop, the moralist; Hannibal and L'Overture, the world's generals; Attucks, the patriot; Allen, religious revolutionist and organizer; Euclid and Banneker, mathematician and astronomer; Wheatley and Dunbar, race poets—all of whom were Negroes devoid of the taint of blood admixture with the much boasted superior white man.

The Almighty Ruler gave the white

man temporary sway, but never perpetual right of empire over the realms of mind and mother earth. Hence all talk of emigration, separation or deportation as solvents of the so-called race unharmony is the rankest sort of balderdash. The "white man's country" forsooth! To his rapacious, omnivorous, ungodly graspings that means a ruthless stampede across the divinely staked-off regions set apart for cycles to the dark or red or olive colored race-varieties. If he has gained the ascendancy by might he will retain it only by righteousness. The earth is the Lord's and the meek shall inherit it rather than proud and haughty nations.

#### TIME AND TRUTH FINAL HEALERS.

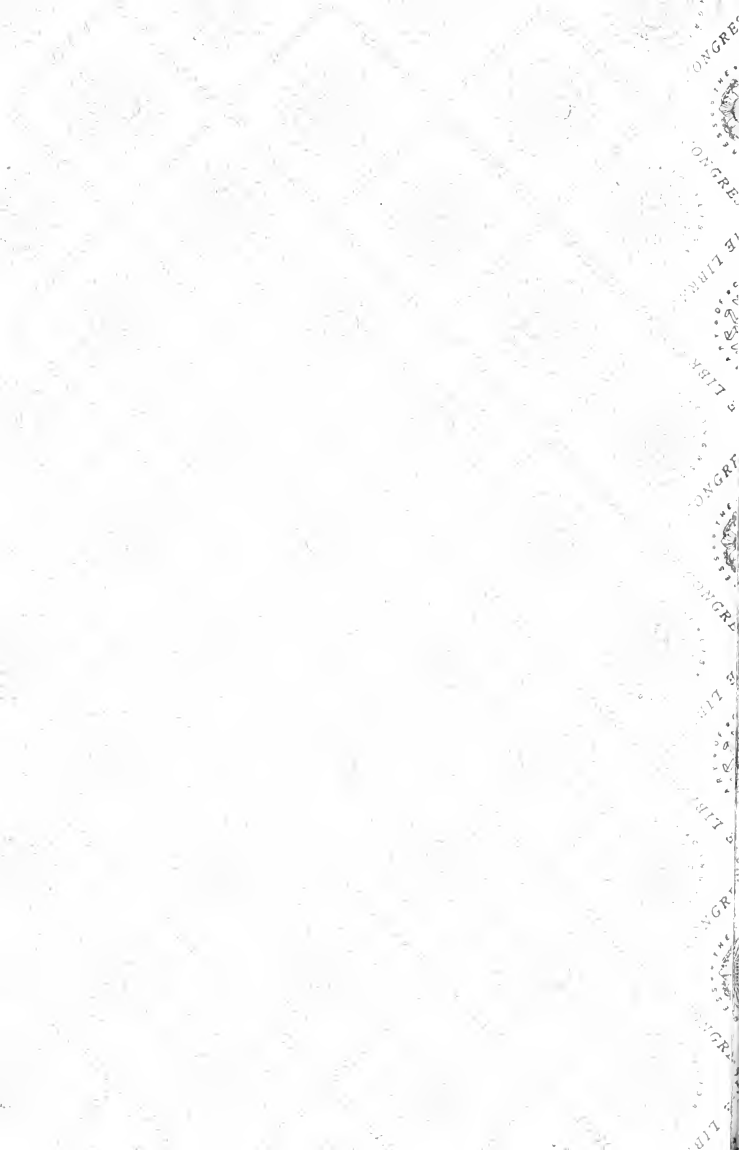
Old Father Time, aided by the sovereign element of Almighty grace, has wrought wonders in the human family and will prove an irresistible leveller of barriers against this Negro branch, the youngest member. Let us recall the past and the accounts must even now be bal-

anced mightily in our favor. Our achievements have been marvellous and our status as decreed by God and fixed by the sovereign powers ordained by Him is irrevocable and lofty. The surgings of the sea of human passion may threaten to engulf or strand the bark on which we journey, but all faithful reckonings by sun or chart or by stars or compass will show that our course is onward, for the ocean's Master, who mapped out our trackless voyage knows how to conduct the craft amid unseen rock and treacherous elements and bring us all in the end to the glorious port of victory. Ever and anon the sun may mantle His visage, but He shines on behind the clouds. "At evening there shall be light" is the sure word of prophecy and always fulfilled in the darkest hours of those who trust in Heaven's guidance.











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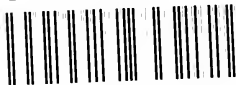
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